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Weyerhaeuser Longview

Longview, WA
(Cowlitz Co.)
Daily News
(Cir. D. 24,182)

MAR 22 1991

Allen's P. C. B. Est. 1888

Energy department lists four hazardous waste sites in Longview

Weyerhaeuser Co. is already cleaning up a hazardous waste site at its Longview mill that state Department of Ecology officials have given top priority for action.

Three other local industrial sites — one at Longview Fibre Co. and two at Reynolds Metals Co. — received lower rankings on a list published recently by the DOE.

Ecology officials say the local sites pose no immediate danger to public health, partly because they are isolated from the general public, and have been known about for a long time. They are just now being ranked under the state Model Toxics Act

for action or further investigation.

Under the 1988 law, DOE is ranking 700 hazardous waste sites statewide. The agency has now ranked 139 sites, including six in Cowlitz County.

Ecology ranks the sites from one to five, based on the level of public health risk, with a "one" deserving the most immediate action.

In addition to the four newly ranked industrial sites, DOE listed the old Ostrander Rock & Construction Co. landfill at Coal Creek Slough as a "four." Part of an embankment holding back the landfill, located on a hill above Ocean Beach Highway,

slid away a year ago and still hasn't been repaired.

Last September, DOE ranked Robert Radakovich's Mount Solo landfill a "one." The site is under study and is still operating.

The Weyerhaeuser site, ranked "one," involves an old building near the chlorine plant that was contaminated over two decades with trace amounts of mercury.

The building, several stories high and nearly 1,000 feet long, is being demolished, said Ken Johnson, the company's Washington environmental affairs manager.

Johnson said the building has

been used as a carpentry and maintenance shop since the company abandoned mercury use in the early 1970s. State and federally sanctioned tests showed mercury levels in the air do not violate worker safety standards, Johnson said.

In high-enough quantities, mercury can cause kidney damage, chronic weakness, headaches, insomnia, depression and personality changes, said Ron Langley, a DOE spokesman.

Longview Fibre's site is a five-acre landfill where company boiler ash was deposited for about 15 years. The site was closed and covered under a DOE-

approved plan about five years ago, Langley said.

The site was ranked a "five" because nearby ground water is contaminated with lead, arsenic, chromium and barium.

The contamination is minor and appears to be contained, Langley said. DOE only wants Fibre to continue monitoring the site.

The two Reynolds sites both ranked five.

One, the old black mud pond, will undergo a DOE-approved closure this summer, Langley said. Work will involve capping the site with clay and draining out contaminated water.

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